

MARVEL

504

WAID
PORTER
RAPMUND

FANTASTIC FOUR

**AUTHORITATIVE
ACTION PART 2**



FEISTER & HARRIS

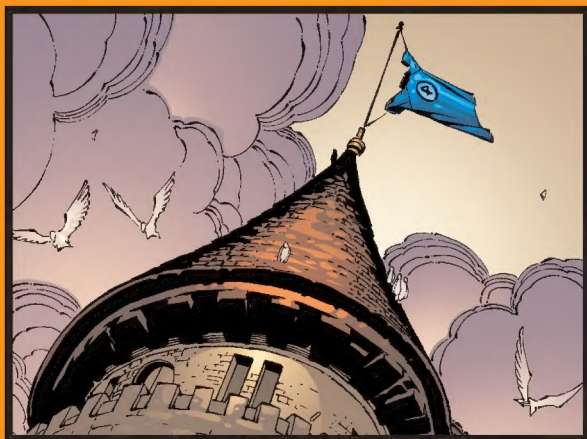
THE FANTASTIC FOUR

1 A team—and a family—of adventurers, explorers and imaginauts, the Fantastic Four lead lives both ordinary—and extraordinary. As of today:

2 For years, the small European nation of Latveria has been under the tyrannical rule of Victor Von Doom. Recently, Reed Richards banished Doom to Hell in a climactic battle that left Reed's face scarred—

3 —and left the citizens of Latveria without government and without protection from neighboring nations. When Reed took his team to Doom's abandoned castle to dispose of Doom's technology, he saw a country on the brink of chaos—

4 —and decided to do something about it.



STAN LEE PRESENTS

"AUTHORITATIVE ACTION" Part 2 of 6



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So you sent your tanks to take it by *force*--and when the F.F. sent 'em packin', you came here to pitch a *fit*.

What?
Tanks?
That's--
I--

I have no idea what--what you're referring to. Sir, who is this man?



We haven't met, *Nick Fury*.



Colonel Fury is with *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, the U.N.'s *peacekeeping force*. When it comes to *border violations*, the Colonel is *very* well-informed.



Particularly when it comes to *unjustified military strikes*.

So the Hungarians call dibs on Latveria, huh? So do the *Serbi*ans and the *Symkari*ans... who, by the way, also want their *barbecue grill* back.

That's some neighborhood you got.

I dunno about the long haul, but in the short run, you oughtta be *thankin'* Richards.



Thanking? His *hostile takeover* leaves the U.N. with *no* idea how to proceed in this matter!

Try it the other way *around*. While the U.N. is squabblin' about what to do with an ungoverned Latveria, the F.F.'s gone in t'keep it from bein' overrun by every nut with a *bayonet*.



Be that as it *may*, Colonel, Richards and his crew are *private citizens*. Their actions, however well-intended, are *wholly unsanctioned* by any government...

...and could carry *grave consequences*.







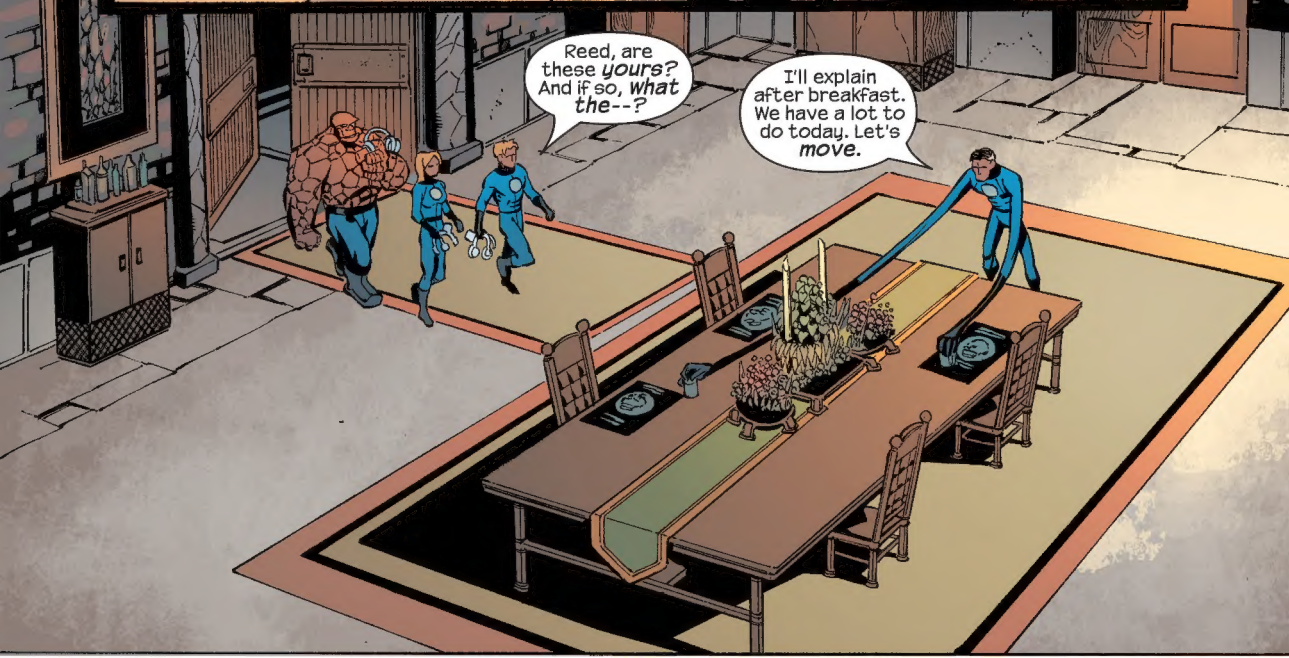
Heck if I know. I
have vague memories
of someone sticking
something on my head
in the middle of the
night.

I thought
it was the
Hat Fairy.

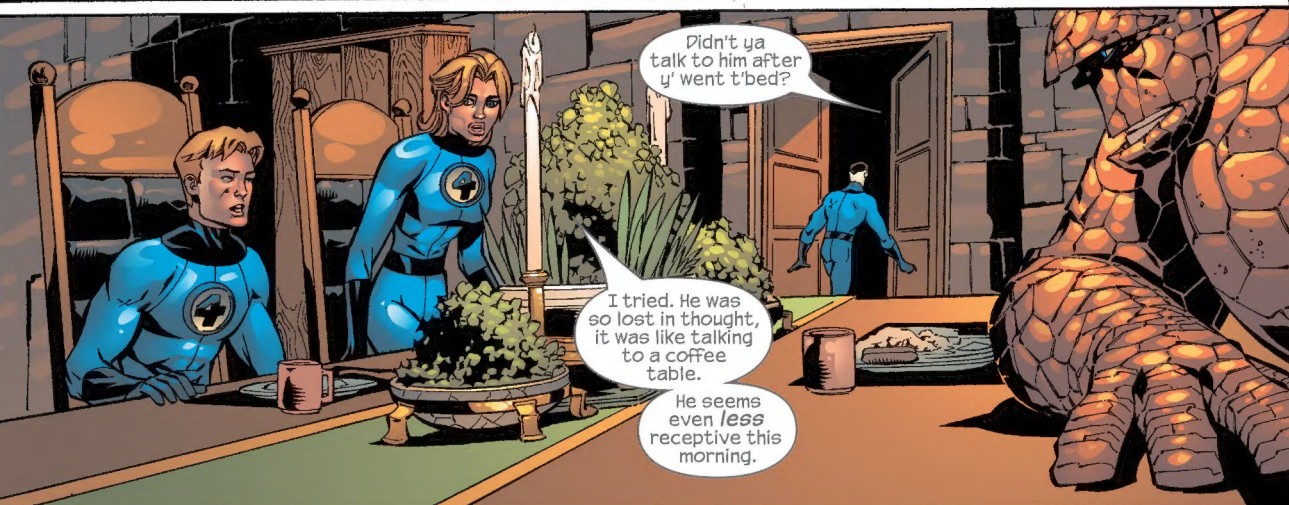
The Hat
Fairy?

Beats
dreaming about
double-D monkeys
all the time...

I am *never*
telling you *anything*
ever again.



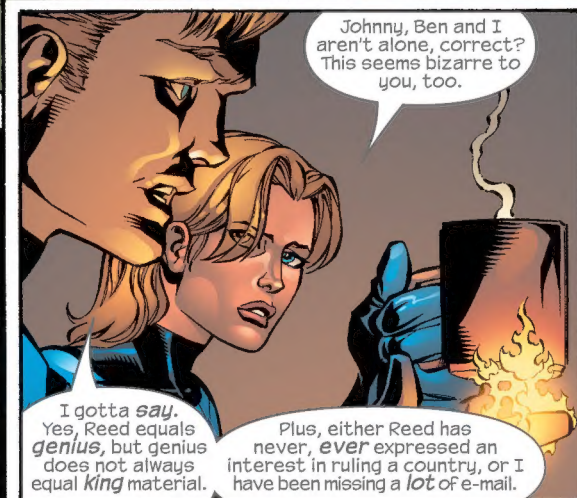
I'll explain
after breakfast.
We have a lot to
do today. Let's
move.



Didn't ya
talk to him after
y' went t'bed?

I tried. He was
so lost in thought,
it was like talking
to a coffee
table.

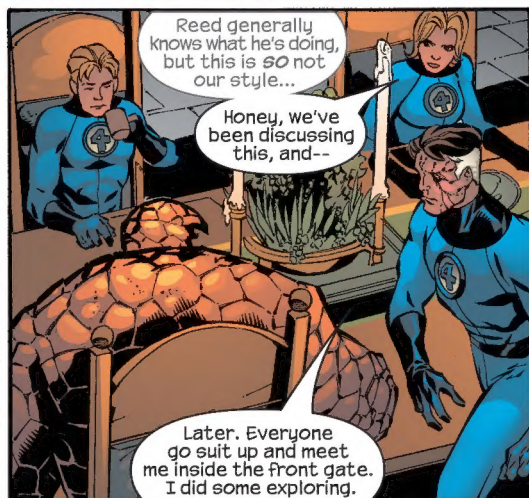
He seems
even *less*
receptive this
morning.



Johnny, Ben and I
aren't alone, correct?
This seems bizarre to
you, too.

I gotta *say*.
Yes, Reed equals
genius, but genius
does not always
equal *king* material.

Plus, either Reed has
never, *ever* expressed an
interest in ruling a country, or I
have been missing a *lot* of e-mail.



Reed generally
knows what he's doing,
but this is *so* not
our style...

Honey, we've
been discussing
this, and--

Later. Everyone
go suit up and meet
me inside the front gate.
I did some exploring.



"I have something I
want to *show* you."



Well, this is hideously... unsettling.

P.S. Hiding ourselves behind one of your force-fields doesn't engender a lot of trust with the crowd.

The crowd that *hates us*? At this point, better safe than sorry.

Go home!

What did you do with our leader?



It's like they *miss* him. That's just bizarre.

Put yourself in their place. Yes, Doom ruled without mercy, but zero-percent unemployment and universal healthcare buy a lot of *devotion*.



They want to *believe* life is good. Hard to blame them. It's easier to live in ignorance than in constant fear.

We demand to know what happened to *Doom*!

TELL US!

TELL US!



Lay off! I'd be *happy* to tell ya, but I don't *speak* Latverian, awright?

You're speaking it *now*.



No, I'm not.

Wait. Yeah, I am!

So are you!

Well, I'll be a bra-wearing monkey! You're right!

The
headsets.



I thought
to whip them
up about two a.m.
They taught you the
language while
you slept.

They're an
old design. I built
a prototype seven,
eight years back.



That long? So,
essentially, you let
me get a 'C' in high
school Spanish. Gee,
thanks.

Here. This
is the building,
but it has no doors
or windows.
Johnny...?

I came across it earlier this morning.
It's accessible solely through the
castle's underground tunnels. The
locals have no clue what's
in here.

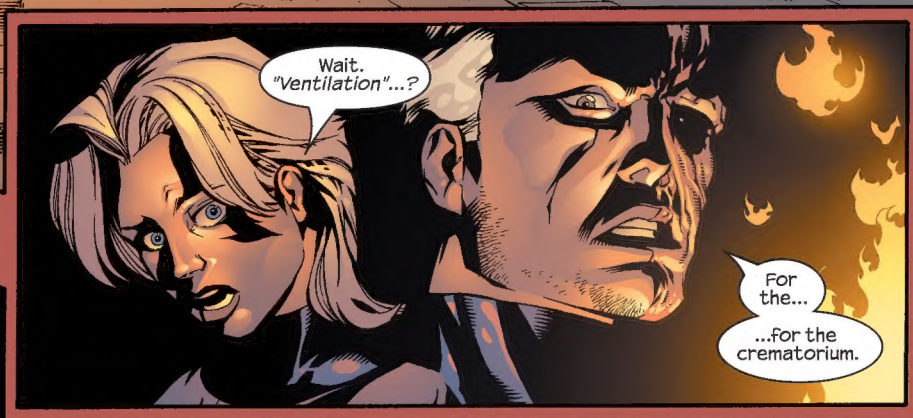
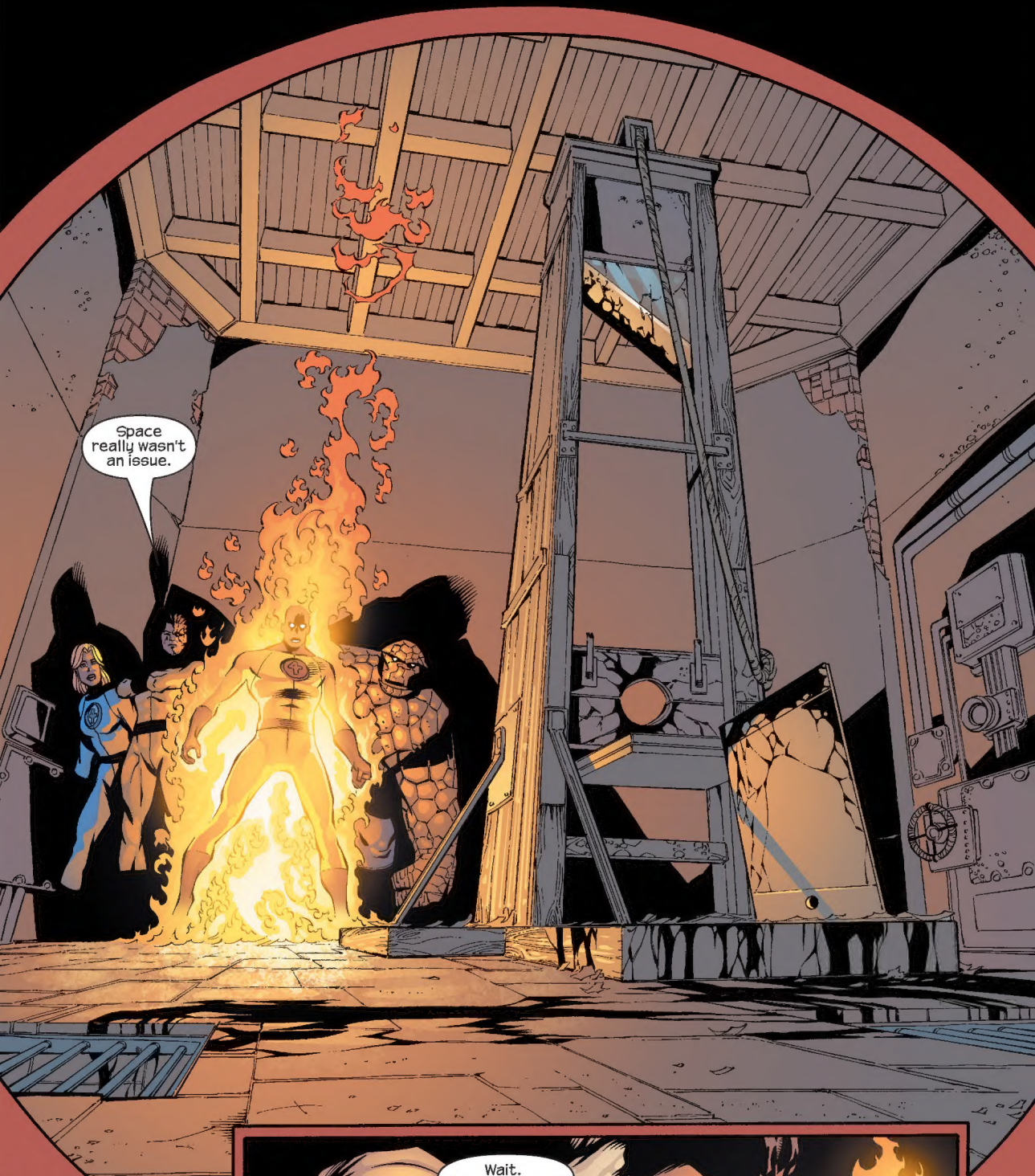


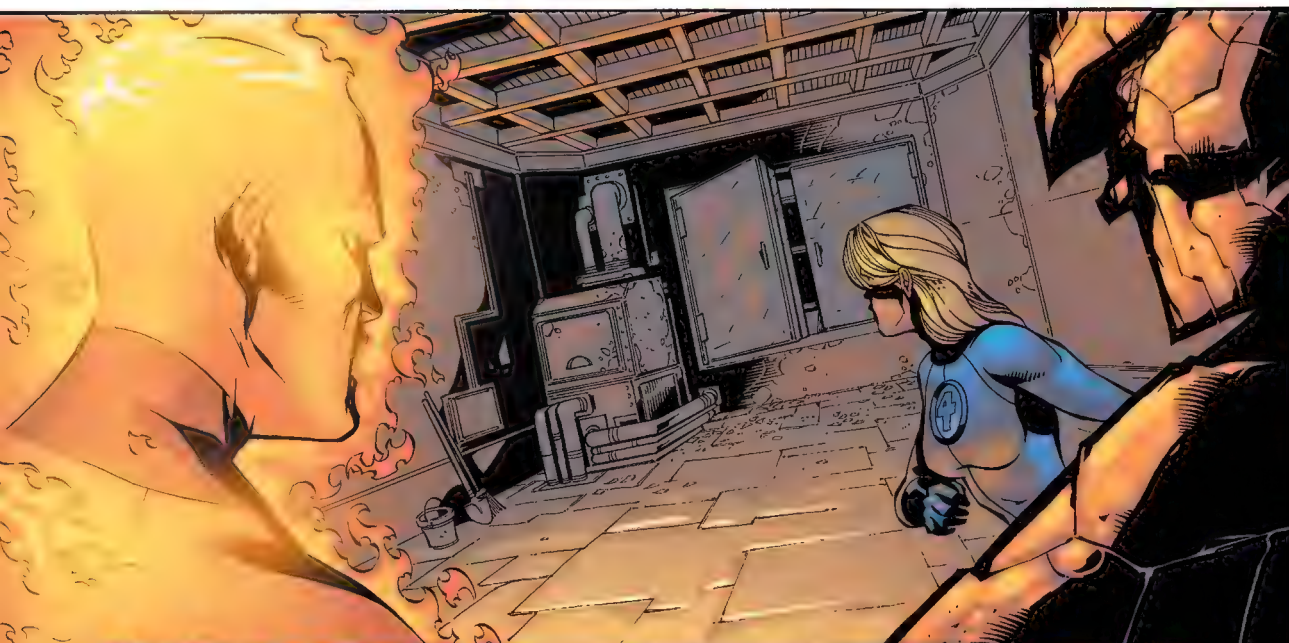
Victor needed it set outdoors for
ventilation, but he didn't want
criminals and political dissidents
making loud, public scenes
when they were dragged
inside.



Dragged? It's
a prison?

It seems
awfully small
for an entire
country.





It's past time someone showed Doom's subjects just how much of a monster their *previous* leader truly was.

Sue, make the walls invisible.

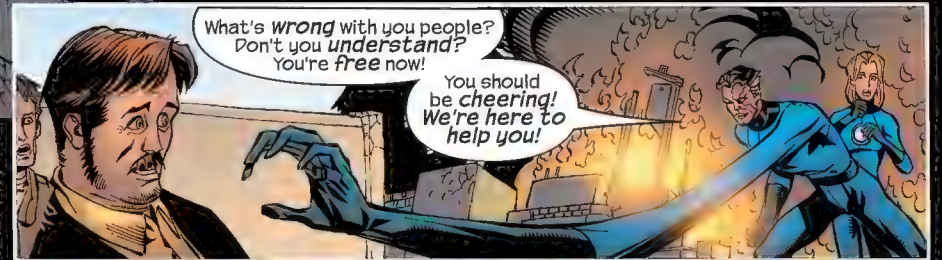
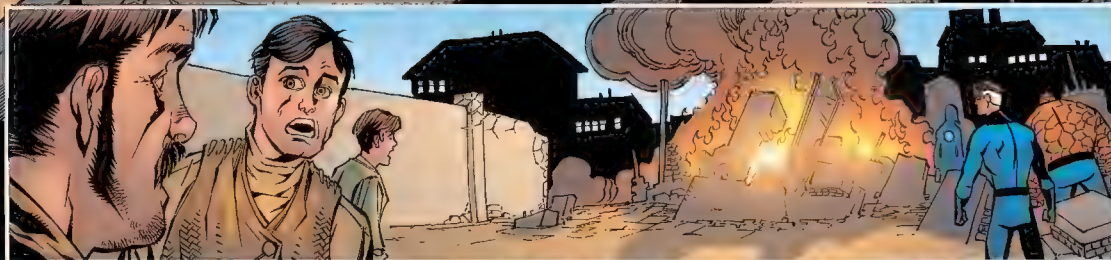
Let them *see*.

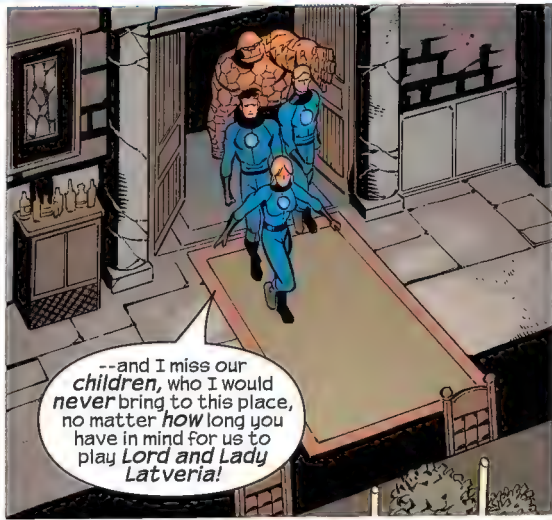
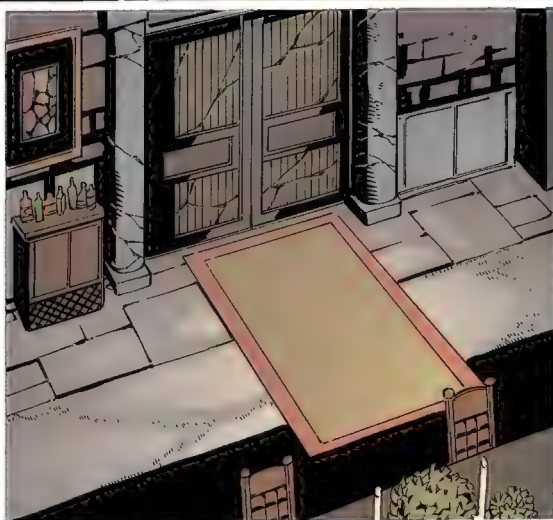
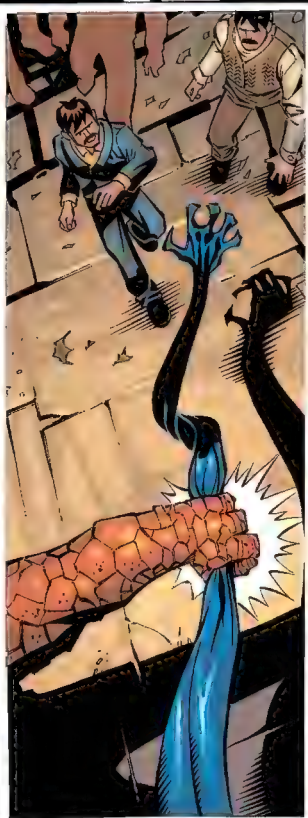


They're not sure what to make of it. I suppose this could be misinterpreted as a threat from the new regime. We'll *fix* that.

People of Latveria! This... this heinous abattoir was Doom's idea of justice--not ours!









Are you listening at all?

Mm-hmm. Johnny, what's your take?

Okay, this doesn't apply to you, because I don't think you've ever actually *sat* in front of what we Earthlings call a "television"...



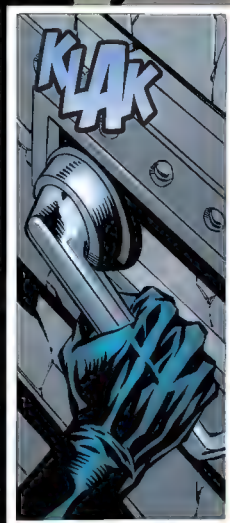
...but speaking as someone who TiVos "Friends" and eats at McDonalds, I cop--reluctantly--to being a puppet of the cathode rays some-times.

TV, radio, magazines, advertising...a huge influence on most people *wherever* they call home.



And, c'mon...Doom's had unlimited control of the media in *this* country since I was a *kid*. He told folks what to think, and he told them constantly.

You, on the other hand, haven't even *introduced* yourself properly. And blowing up a *building* is not a very effective State of the Union Address.



KlAK



They consider us the enemy because you *know*, for years, that's the picture *Doom painted* of us.

You can't be surprised we didn't change their minds in twenty minutes. I don't know that we can change it at *all*.

I see. Ben?



I dunno. Y'r smarter'n Doom was. You always were. But government ain't a science ya can learn like...I dunno... *astronomy*.

Ya can't figger out human behavior on graphs 'n' charts. I don't gotta remind you o' that.



We got what we wanted. Latveria's free. Who're we not ta let it find its own way?



Exactly. Reed, one of your greatest gifts is that you *always* listen to your heart over your mind.

But you're treating this like an intellectual exercise. These people aren't a social experiment. And Latveria isn't your laboratory.



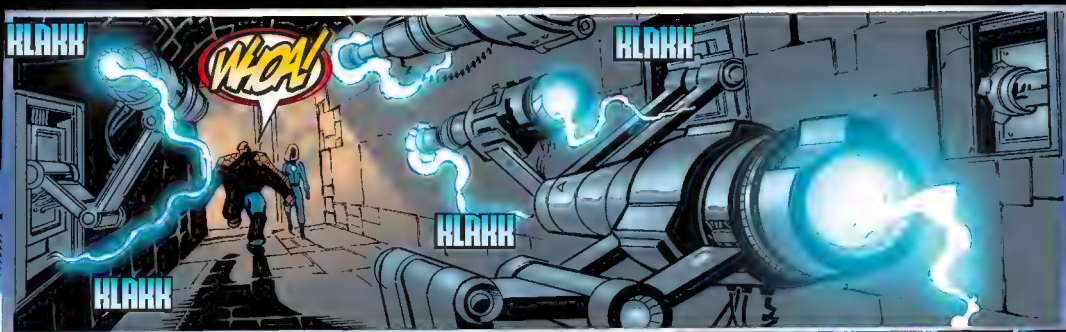
Ben, you might want to walk ahead.

Huh?

Sue, stay eight feet behind him, then Johnny. Johnny, flame on.

But--

Trust me.



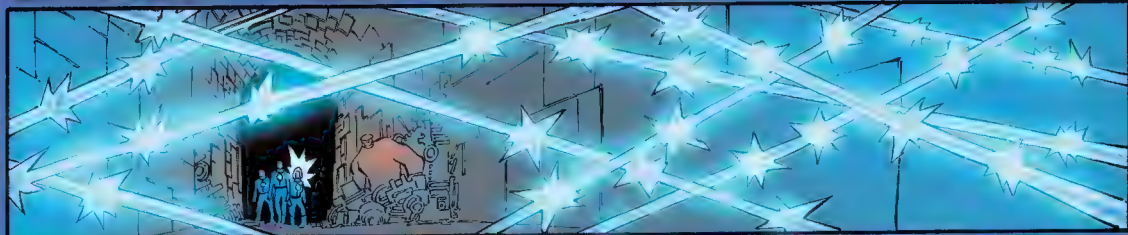


Now I'm good.



Ya mind tellin' me--

In a minute. Sue, I can't remember the last time you turned an invisible object **visible**. Try "**finding**" another trap down the corridor.



Bending light around a web of razor wire. Doom was just warming up.

Insert pun **here**. What's next, Indiana?



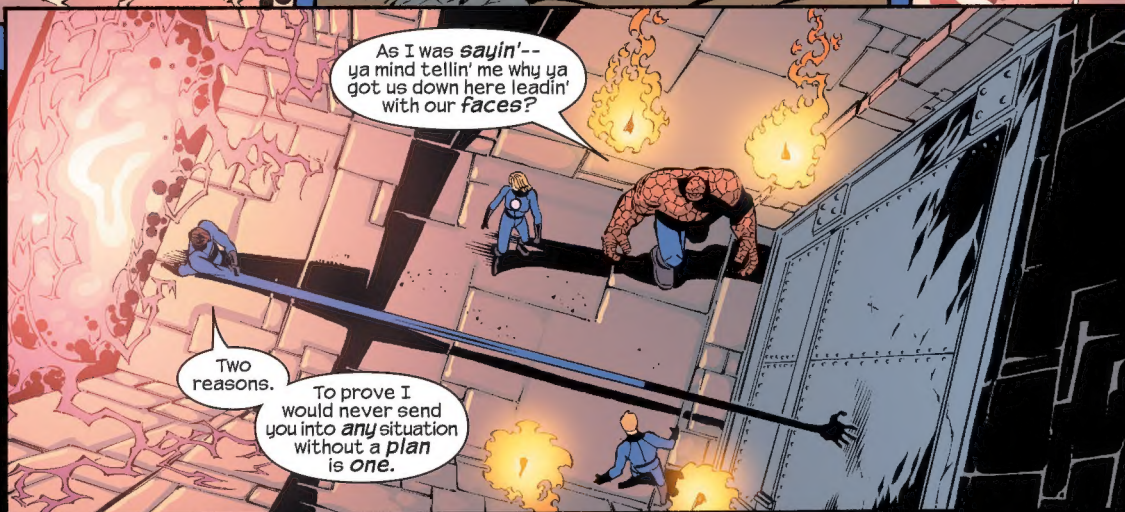
The **temporal labyrinth**. Keep sight of my arm and just keep **walking**. Turn left or right or even **hesitate** and you'll be lost **forever**.



Lost where?

Not "where." When.

Yow. Harsh...!



As I was sayin'-- ya mind tellin' me why ya got us down here leadin' with our faces?

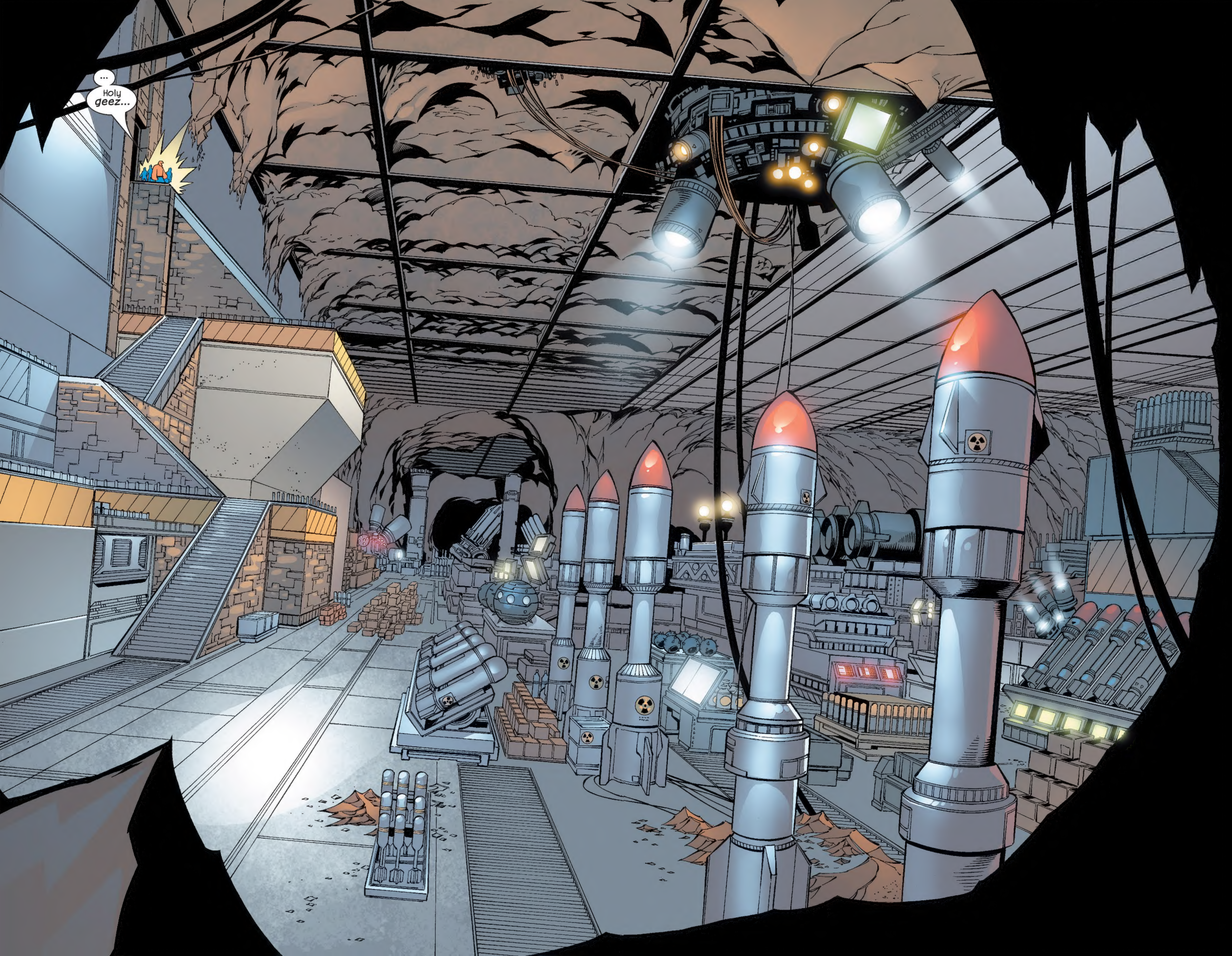
Two reasons.

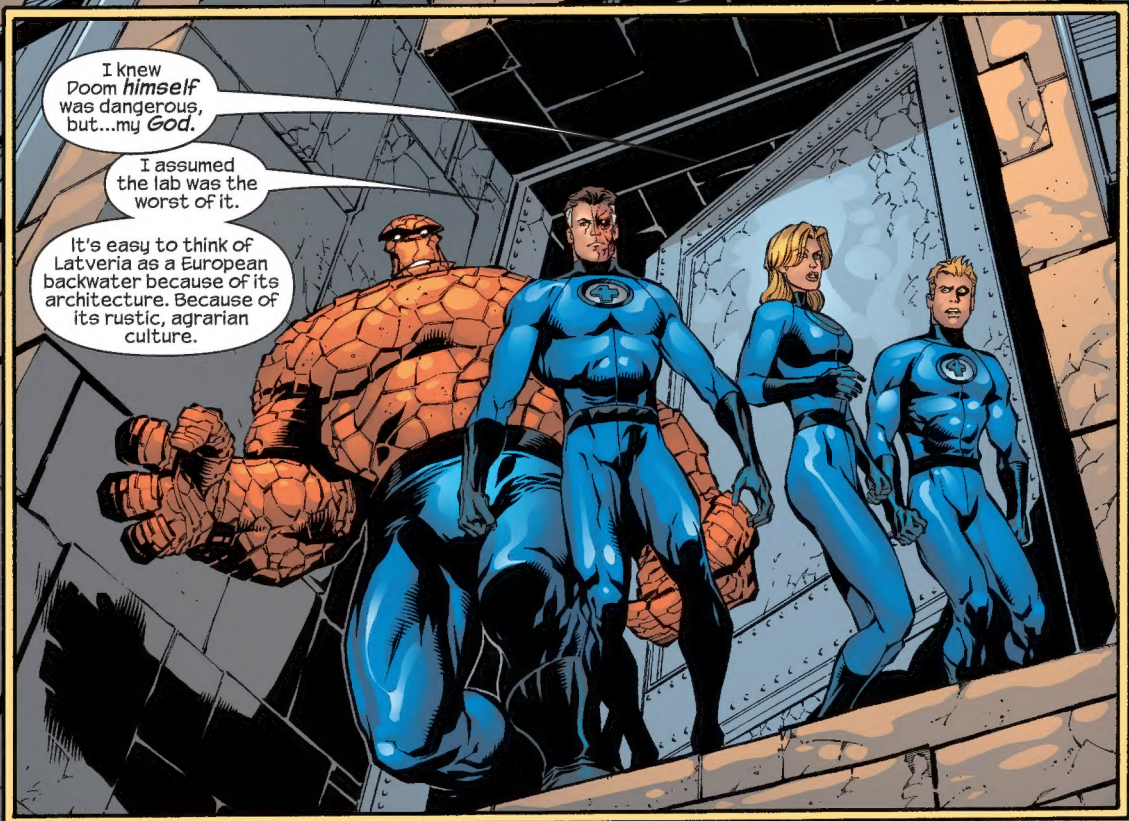
To prove I would never send you into *any* situation without a *plan* is *one*.



This is the other.

...
Holy
geez...





I knew
Doom *himself*
was dangerous,
but...my *God*.

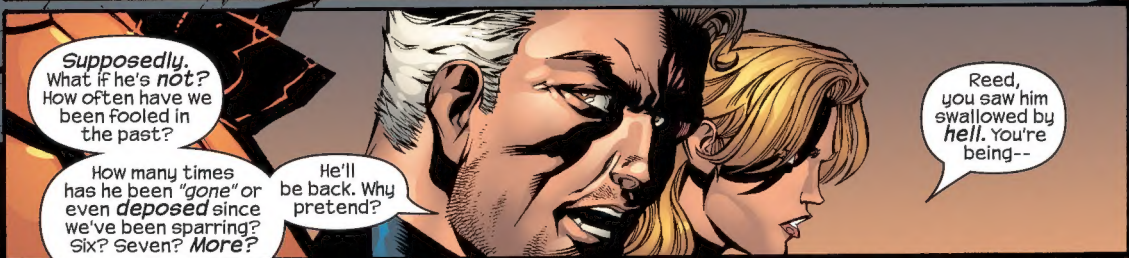
I assumed
the lab was the
worst of it.

It's easy to think of
Latveria as a European
backwater because of its
architecture. Because of
its rustic, agrarian
culture.

No. To borrow a reference
from Johnny, it's the
Disneyland of Horror. It's
the Most Dangerous
Place On Earth.

And Victor
cannot have it
any more.

Vict--?
Reed, Victor's
dead.



Supposedly.
What if he's *not*?
How often have we
been fooled in
the past?

How many times
has he been "gone" or
even *deposed* since
we've been sparring?
Six? Seven? *More*?

He'll
be back. Why
pretend?

Reed,
you saw him
swallowed by
hell. You're
being--



Unrealistic? Sue, he *always*
comes back.

And when he *does*, he
comes back to his *technology* and
his *fortune* and his *sovereignty*
and his *diplomatic immunity*
and he hurts *YOU AND ME AND*
OUR CHILDREN AND--

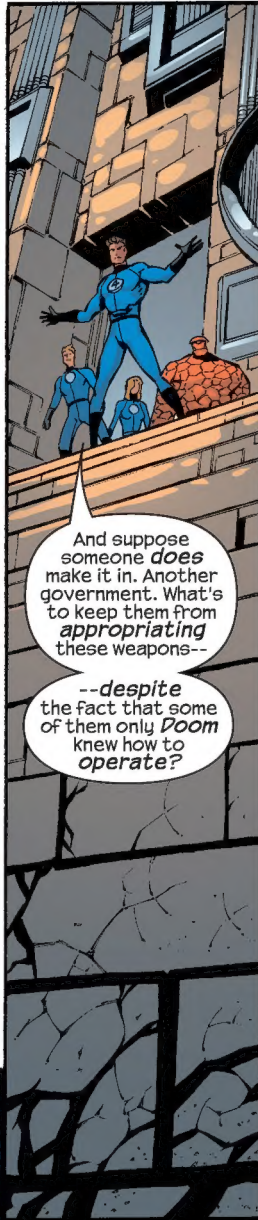


--and I'm
done with
it.
I'm done
with it.



We keep accomplishing half the job. We beat Victor, but we don't clean up after him.

And only *We* can. Not U.N. inspectors. Not some Latvian *burgomeister* in stockings and a tweed hat. This room's defenses would have cut them in half.



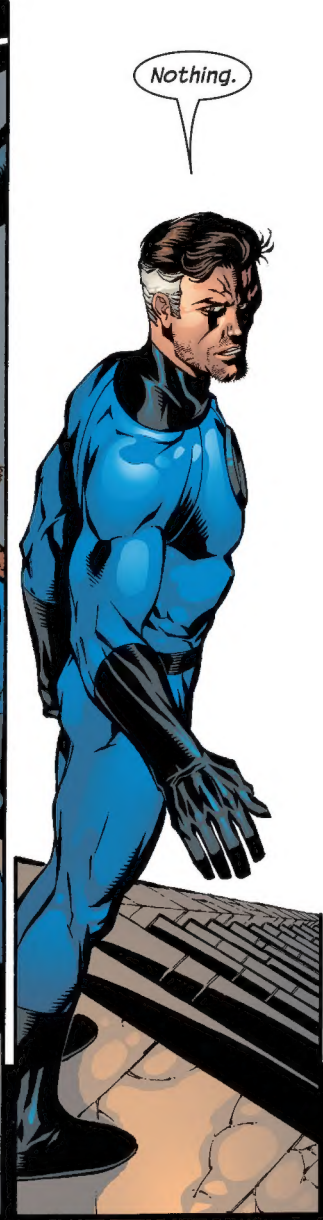
And suppose someone *does* make it in. Another government. What's to keep them from *appropriating* these weapons--

--*despite* the fact that some of them only *Doom* knew how to *operate*?



We're in charge because we're responsible. We have to undo Victor's damage.

And I say that when he *does* rise again, he finds we've left him with nothing.



Nothing.



TO BE CONTINUED